

**IN THE CLAIMS**

This list of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application. Please cancel claims 3, 23, 31, 37-38, 45, 54, 60-61, 68, 77, and 83-84 without prejudice, and amend claims 1, 4-5, 10, 16-18, 23-26, 32, 39, 40, 41, 46-49, 55-56, 62-64, 69-72, and 78 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:  
at least three communication devices, and  
a seating-order determination device for generating seating-order information at each point of time for information sent from each communication device and for transmitting the seating-order information to each communication device,  
wherein the seating-order determination device groups the information sent from each communication device according to the degree of attention which each user pays to the information sent from each communication device, and generates the seating-order information according to the result of grouping.

2. (Original) A communication system according to claim 1, wherein the seating-order determination device generates the seating-order information at each point of time for information sent from the at least three communication devices, according to the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) A communication system according to claim [[3]] 1, wherein the seating-order information is generated such that information belonging to the same group is arranged.

5. (Currently Amended) A communication system according to claim [[3]] 1, wherein the seating-order information is generated such that information belonging to the same group is dispersed almost uniformly.

6. (Original) A communication system according to claim 1, wherein each communication device controls the output position of the information sent from other communication devices, according to the seating-order information to output the information sent from the other communication devices in a seating order corresponding to the seating-order information, and

when the seating order is changed according to the seating order information, each communication device outputs indication information indicating a change in the seating order to the user.

7. (Original) A communication system according to claim 6, wherein the indication information is image information.

8. (Original) A communication system according to claim 6, wherein the indication information is audio information.

9. (Original) A communication system according to claim 6, wherein the indication information includes image information and audio information.

10. (Currently Amended) A communication system according to claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein each communication device controls the output position of the information sent from other communication devices, according to the seating-order information to output the information sent from the other communication devices in a seating order corresponding to the seating-order information, and each communication device outputs indication information indicating the state of grouping to the user.

11. (Original) A communication system according to claim 10, wherein the indication information is background image information obtained when the information sent from the other communication devices is output.

12. (Original) A communication system according to claim 11, wherein the background image information is generated such that information belonging to the same group has the same background color.

13. (Original) A communication system according to claim 2, wherein the degree of attention is determined according to user-behavior detection information or information specified by the user.

14. (Original) A communication system according to claim 13, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-sight-line detection information.

15. (Original) A communication system according to claim 13, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-face-direction detection information.

16. (Currently Amended) A communication system according to claim [[3]] 1, wherein the grouping is performed according to the statistical relationship between a group structure and the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from the other communication devices.

17. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination device provided for a communication system having at least three communication devices, comprising:

seating-order-information generating means for generating seating-order information at each point of time for information sent from each communication device; [[and ]]

transmitting means for sequentially transmitting the seating-order information generated by the seating-order-information generating means to each communication device; and

receiving means for receiving attention-degree information indicating the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device,

wherein the seating-order-information generating means groups the information sent from each communication device according to the attention-degree information received by the

receiving means, and generates the seating-order information according to the result of grouping.

18. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination device according to claim 17, ~~further comprising receiving means for receiving attention-degree information indicating the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device,~~

wherein the seating-order-information generating means generates the seating-order information according to the attention-degree information received by the receiving means.

19. (Original) A seating-order determination device according to claim 18, wherein the degree of attention is determined according to user-behavior detection information or information specified by the user.

20. (Original) A seating-order determination device according to claim 19, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-sight-line detection information.

21. (Original) A seating-order determination device according to claim 19, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-face-direction detection information.

22. (Cancelled).

23. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination device according to claim ~~[[22]]~~ 17, wherein the seating-order-information generating means generates the seating-order

information such that information belonging to the same group is arranged.

24. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination device according to claim [[22]] 17, wherein the seating-order-information generating means generates the seating-order information such that information belonging to the same group is dispersed almost uniformly.

25. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination device according to claim [[22]] 17, wherein the grouping is performed according to the statistical relationship between a group structure and the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from the other communication devices.

26. (Currently Amended) A communication device in a communication system including at least three communication devices communicating with each other, comprising:

receiving means for receiving information and seating-order information sent from other communication devices;

attention-degree-information generating means for detecting the degree of attention which the user pays to the information sent from the other communication devices to generate attention-degree information;

transmitting means for transmitting the attention-degree information generated by the attention-degree-information generating means;

presenting means for presenting the information sent from the other communication devices; and

information manipulation and distribution means for controlling the output positions of the information sent from the other communication devices according to the seating-order information received by the receiving means to output the information sent from the other communication devices in a seating order corresponding to the seating-order information,

wherein the information manipulation and distribution means outputs indication information indicating a state of grouping, which is a basis of the seating information, applied to the information sent from the other communication devices, to the user.

27. (Original) A communication device according to claim 26, wherein, when the seating order is changed according to the seating-order information, the information manipulation and distribution means outputs indication information indicating a change in the seating order to the user.

28. (Original) A communication device according to claim 27, wherein the indication information is image information.

29. (Original) A communication device according to claim 27, wherein the indication information is audio information.

30. (Original) A communication device according to claim 27, wherein the indication information includes image information and audio information.

31. (Cancelled).

32. (Currently Amended) A communication device according to claim ~~[[31]]~~ 26, wherein the indication information is background image information obtained when the information sent from the other communication devices is output.

33. (Original) A communication device according to claim 32, wherein the background image information is generated such that information belonging to the same group has the same background color.

34. (Original) A communication device according to claim 26, wherein the attention-degree-information generating means generates the attention-degree information according to user-behavior detection information or information specified by the user.

35. (Original) A communication device according to claim 34, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-sight-line detection information.

36. (Original) A communication device according to claim 34, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-face-direction detection information.

37. (Cancelled).

38. (Cancelled).



39. (Currently Amended) A communication method for a communication system having at least three communication devices, comprising:

- a seating-order generating step of generating seating-order information at each point of time for information sent from each communication device; [[and ]]
- a transmitting step of sequentially transmitting the seating-order information generated in the seating-order generating step to each communication device; and
- receiving step of receiving attention-degree information indicating the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device,
- wherein the seating-order generating step groups the information sent from each communication device according to the attention-degree information received at the receiving step, and generates the seating-order information according to the result of grouping.

40. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination method for a seating-order determination device provided for a communication system having at least three communication devices, comprising:

- a seating-order-information generating step of generating seating-order information at each point of time for information sent from each communication device; [[and ]]
- a transmitting step of sequentially transmitting the seating-order information generated in the seating-order-information generating step to each communication device; and
- a receiving step of receiving attention-degree information indicating the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device,

wherein, in the seating-order-information generating step, the information sent from each communication device is grouped according to the attention-degree information received in the receiving step, and the seating-order information is generated according to the result of grouping.

41. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination method according to claim 40, ~~further comprising a receiving step of receiving attention-degree information indicating the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device,~~

wherein, in the seating-order-information generating step, the seating-order information is generated according to the attention-degree information received in the receiving step.

42. (Original) A seating-order determination method according to claim 41, wherein the degree of attention is determined according to user-behavior detection information or information specified by the user.

43. (Original) A seating-order determination method according to claim 42, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-sight-line detection information.

44. (Original) A seating-order determination method according to claim 42, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-face-direction detection information.

45. (Cancelled).

46. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination method according to claim [[45]] 40, wherein, in the seating-order-information generating step, the seating-order information is generated such that information belonging to the same group is arranged.

47. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination method according to claim [[45]] 40, wherein, in the seating-order-information generating step, the seating-order information is generated such that information belonging to the same group is dispersed almost uniformly.

48. (Currently Amended) A seating-order determination method according to claim [[45]] 40, wherein the grouping is performed according to the statistical relationship between a group structure and the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from the other communication devices.

49. (Currently Amended) A communication method for a communication device in a communication system including at least three communication devices communicating with each other, comprising:

a receiving step of receiving information and seating- order information sent from other communication devices;

an attention-degree-information generating step of detecting the degree of attention which the user pays to the information sent from the other communication devices to generate attention-degree information;

a transmitting step of transmitting the attention-degree information generated in the attention-degree-information generating step;

a presenting step of presenting the information sent from the other communication devices; and

an information manipulation and distribution step of controlling the output positions of the information sent from the other communication devices according to the seating-order information received in the receiving step to output the information sent from the other communication devices in a seating order corresponding to the seating-order information,

wherein indication information indicating a state of grouping, which is a basis of the seating information, applied to the information sent from the other communication devices is output to the user in the information manipulation and distribution step.

50. (Original) A communication method according to claim 49, wherein, when the seating order is changed according to the seating-order information, indication information indicating a change in the seating order is output to the user in the information manipulation and distribution step.

51. (Original) A communication method according to claim 50, wherein the indication information is image information.

52. (Original) A communication method according to claim 50, wherein the indication information is audio information.

53. (Original) A communication method according to claim 50, wherein the indication information includes image information and audio information.

54. (Cancelled).

55. (Currently Amended) A communication method according to claim ~~[[54]]~~ 49, wherein the indication information is background image information obtained when the information sent from the other communication devices is output.

56. (Currently Amended) A communication method according to claim ~~[[55]]~~ 49, wherein the background image information is generated such that information belonging to the same group has the same background color.

57. (Original) A communication method according to claim 49, wherein, in the attention-degree-information generating step, the attention-degree information is generated according to user-behavior detection information or information specified by the user.

58. (Original) A communication method according to claim 57, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-sight-line detection information.

59. (Original) A communication method according to claim 57, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-face-direction detection information.

60. (Cancelled).

61. (Cancelled).

62. (Currently Amended) A recording medium for storing a processing program related to seating information for information sent from each communication device in a communication system having at least three communication devices, the processing program comprising:

a seating-order generating step of generating seating-order information at each point of time for information sent from each communication device; [[and ]]

a transmitting step of sequentially transmitting the seating-order information generated in the seating-order generating step to each communication device; and

receiving step of receiving attention-degree information indicating the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device,

wherein the seating-order generating step groups the information sent from each communication device according to the attention-degree information received at the receiving step, and generates the seating-order information according to the result of grouping.

63. (Currently Amended) A recording medium for storing a processing program related to seating-order determination in a seating-order determination device provided for a communication system having at least three communication devices, the processing program comprising:

a seating-order-information generating step of generating seating-order information at each point of time for information sent from each communication device; [[and ]]

a transmitting step of sequentially transmitting the seating-order information generated in the seating-order-information generating step to each communication device;

a receiving step of receiving attention-degree information indicating the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device; and

in the seating-order-information generating step, the information sent from each communication device is grouped according to the attention-degree information received in the receiving step, and the seating-order information is generated according to the result of grouping.

64. (Currently Amended) A recording medium according to claim 63, wherein the ~~processing program further comprises a receiving step of receiving attention-degree information indicating the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from each communication device; and~~ in the seating-order-information generating step, the seating-order information is generated according to the attention-degree information received in the receiving step.

65. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 64, wherein the degree of attention is determined according to user- behavior detection information or information specified by the user.

66. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 65, wherein the user-behavior

detection information includes user-sight-line detection information.

67. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 65, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-face-direction detection information.

68. (Cancelled).

69. (Currently Amended) A recording medium according to claim ~~[[68]]~~ 63, wherein, in the seating-order-information generating step, the seating-order information is generated such that information belonging to the same group is arranged.

70. (Currently Amended) A recording medium according to claim ~~[[68]]~~ 63, wherein, in the seating-order-information generating step, the seating-order information is generated such that information belonging to the same group is dispersed almost uniformly.

71. (Currently Amended) A recording medium according to claim ~~[[68]]~~ 63, wherein the grouping is performed according to the statistical relationship between a group structure and the degree of attention which the user of each communication device pays to the information sent from the other communication devices.

72. (Currently Amended) A recording medium for storing a processing program related to communication in a communication device of a communication system including at



least three communication devices communicating with each other, the processing program comprising:

a receiving step of receiving information and seating-order information sent from other communication devices;

an attention-degree-information generating step of detecting the degree of attention which the user pays to the information sent from the other communication devices to generate attention-degree information;

a transmitting step of transmitting the attention-degree information generated in the attention-degree-information generating step;

a presenting step of presenting the information sent from the other communication devices; and

an information manipulation and distribution step of controlling the output positions of the information sent from the other communication devices according to the seating-order information received in the receiving step to output the information sent from the other communication devices in a seating order corresponding to the seating-order information,

wherein indication information indicating a state of grouping, which is a basis of the seating information, applied to the information sent from the other communication devices is output to the user in the information manipulation and distribution step.

73. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 72, wherein, when the seating order is changed according to the seating-order information, indication information indicating a change in the seating order is output to the user in the information manipulation and distribution step.

74. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 73, wherein the indication information is image information.

75. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 73, wherein the indication information is audio information.

76. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 73, wherein the indication information includes image information and audio information.

77. (Cancelled).

78. (Currently Amended) A recording medium according to claim ~~[[77]]~~ 72, wherein the indication information is background image information obtained when the information sent from the other communication devices is output.

79. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 78, wherein the background image information is generated such that information belonging to the same group has the same background color.

80. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 72, wherein, in the attention-degree-information generation step, the attention-degree information is generated according to user-behavior detection information or information specified by the user.

81. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 80, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-sight-line detection information.

82. (Original) A recording medium according to claim 80, wherein the user-behavior detection information includes user-face-direction detection information.

83. (Cancelled).

84. (Cancelled).